42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

Whereas a banquet is almost always a part of the ceremony and *bási* usually flows freely, it is not to be wondered at that a few altercations and occasional hot words are interspersed in the conversation at regular intervals. Both parties of course look for their own interests: the one tries to get the largest possible amount of valuables, while the other is bent on reducing them to a minimum. Although the whole affair usually ends in a mutual agreement, nevertheless it may happen that at this juncture the meeting is broken up and that no further steps are taken toward the final marriage. Here, however, one has again to reckon with the two young people themselves, who may have set their minds very firmly on the attainment of their hearts' desire, and so an agreement may have to be reached, even though one of the parties is loath to conform. If nevertheless the *amómaṅ* miscarries, the reason is usually to be found in the all too high price exacted by the parents of the girl, or on the all too low value at which the girl is esteemed by those of the boy. But here also the engaged couple may act on their own initiative, as has been explained when stating the case in which the girl's parents refused the *simbá-* beads during the *sumpád* ceremony.

It should be noted here that the relatives of the groom who take part in the *amómaṅ* would hardly dare to start on this important expedition without having provided themselves with the customary amulets, lest some harm befall them. These amulets are called *talimúñay*, and consist of certain herbs that remain the secret of the shaman.

Although by this time the Isneg know very well the use and value of currency, nevertheless in matrimonial contracts they stick to the old way of paying in kind, and so the *tádug* consists of what the Isneg prize above anything else, namely jars and beads. To these are sometimes added plates, clothes, etc., according to the agreement reached by both parties at the *amómaṅ*. It would be very hard to say what is the regular price paid for an Isneg girl, as everything depends on the means at the disposal of the interested party, but one *xúsi* jar at least and a few beads should be considered as the very smallest amount that could be exacted by the girl's parents. It is not the place here to enumerate the numerous kinds of *xúsi* jars and beads, each with its own native name, that are known to the Isneg. Suffice it to say that not a few of these jars will be valued at fifty dollars, although from our viewpoint they may be worth less than one tenth of that amount; but our evaluation is not that of the Isneg,

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

and, if they consider them to be as valuable as that, it is their own business after all. The same may be said with reference to the beads: a single one, if very valuable in the eyes of the natives, may command the price of a carabao or water buffalo, from thirty to fifty dollars, while other ones may be had almost for the asking.

All these jars are earthenware of Chinese make, imported from China long before the arrival of the Spaniards; consequently antiquity is an important item in the estimation of their value. Jars that have been imported recently usually command a much lower price. A great many of the beads also antedate the coming of the Spaniards and were also originally imported from China. Actually, however, beads of all kinds have been put on the market and their origin is very often shrouded in mystery. Isneg plates are all made of coarse earthenware and have mostly been introduced from China; but, although most of them date from comparatively recent times, they are still of the same kind, shape, color and composition as those they have replaced, as may be proved by fragments occasionally unearthed in places formerly inhabited by Isneg. These people certainly hold fast to their old ways and customs; modern crockery is not to their taste. As the Isneg do not weave their own clothes, the latter have of necessity to be bought from outsiders.

During the *amómān* it is also decided whether the boy has to stay with his parents-in-law or not, and for how long in case he has to do so, which is the customary way. The number of years varies very much, as some stay three years, others from five to ten, and even in a few cases the husband never goes back to the house of his own parents.

No really important business can be transacted, of course, among the Isneg, without remembering the cravings of the stomach. In the ordinary course of events one or more pigs are slaughtered according to the social standing of the girl's parents. If they are too poor to indulge in such prodigality, a chicken will do. In both cases a dog may complete the menu, although this is not absolutely required. No special name is given to the killing and consuming of the chicken; but if one or more pigs enter the lists, the whole ceremony is called *pildáp*. Nevertheless in a few isolated cases, when the people are much too poor, the banquet is completely left out, and the deliberations are conducted on empty stomachs.

All during the *amómān* the men conduct everything that is connected with the *pildáp*. The *dorarákit* or shamaness does not interfere in the least.